

A Business Plan and Community Vision for a Productive Greenhouse in Seward

**Prepared by
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Conducted on behalf of
Seward Redesign
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By Megan Sheridan

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Executive Summary

A recent and powerful local foods movement has swept our nation's social consciousness. In response, Redesign sought to develop a local foods program of its own in the form of an urban agriculture project. The goals of this project were to research and obtain funding for start-up costs, identify an operator and develop a business plan for an economically viable urban farm. In the midst of this urban agriculture "gold rush," we found that economic viability without foundation grants is essential, site control is key and that farmers and community developers must bring their respective skills together and do what each other has always done best in order for the vision of urban agriculture to become a reality.

Local Foods Movement

In recent years, interest in locally grown foods has skyrocketed. Farmer's markets are cropping up all over the city while cooperative grocery stores offering local foods are booming (the newly expanded Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli has actually doubled its sales projections in the last year) as people become increasingly attuned to where their food is coming from and how it is grown.

Among the front runners in this revolutionary movement is the City of Minneapolis. Despite our less than accommodating climate, Minnesotans have a strong history of producing our own food in times of need. During World War II, Minnesota was home to over 130,000 Victory Gardens and by 1944 was producing an estimated 40 percent of all fresh vegetables consumed in the state.

Today, we find ourselves in a similar state of need - the economy has crashed, an obesity epidemic is sweeping the nation and growing movements of people are seeking to reconnect with good, real food. Within the past year, local foods and urban gardening programs have dominated the media and been at the forefront of social consciousness. Will Allen's Growing Power (visit growingpower.org for more information), among an increasing number of other programs, have captured the hearts of funders and established local foods programs as gems in their respective communities. In Minneapolis, the Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations (see attached) were recently adopted by the City Council in response to the need for policies that support local food systems and, particularly relevant to my research, commercial urban agriculture.

Project Goals

The main goal of this project was to facilitate the creation of a commercial urban farm in Seward. This included locating a site, actively seeking funding for site preparation and hoop house construction, researching and bidding construction materials and methods, interviewing and working with potential operators, facilitating the preparation of a business plan, and investigating zoning and permitting issues with the City.

Project Development - Getting to know the Landscape

Despite the thousands of years humans spent perfecting the art of 'local foods,' the movement to undo the damage done by the industrialized food system has been rather difficult. For non agriculture related organizations like Redesign, food systems are uncharted territory. On the other hand, agriculturalists generally have little experience with urban populations and structures.



Aside from Will Allen, few commercial urban agriculture ventures have made successful strides in uniting the knowledge of growing systems with the capacity for lowering the cost of urban land and weeding through the zoning and permitting jungle. Even Growing Power, the only example of viable commercial urban agriculture to date, started its operation on vacant land and has skipped zoning and permitting questions by making nice with the neighbors. Will Allen's model is iconic and has played a central role in this revolution, but in order to be replicated in cities across the country, will require new relationships and collaboration among community developers and agriculturalists.

The Community Developers. Redesign, Inc., a non-profit community development corporation, has over 40 years experience developing urban land, working with the City, working with entrepreneurs and doing small business development. We can provide project management to deal with these issues that often prevent urban farmers from doing anything more than a backyard or community garden. See attached cover letter to potential operators.

The Farmers and Food Thinkers. At Redesign, we are not farmers. We are well versed in City ordinances and development, but we definitely do not know how to commercially grow food. Attached is a list of the farmers and food thinkers that were essential to the success of this project.

Funding Strategies - Navigating the Local Food 'Gold Rush'

There is not enough funding to meet the need or desire for local foods through urban agriculture. Everyone in the Twin Cities is rushing to grab the scare funds that exist to implement urban agriculture practices in their respective communities. The competition is stiff and money is tight - but this is not a game with winners and losers, it is a major paradigm shift in which no one should be left behind. This is why we have to develop strategies to make an urban agriculture project economically viable without volunteer work and foundation grants.

Start a Business. In order to implement and sustain a model that is viable on a broad scale it cannot be dependant on philanthropic dollars, so our vision is to create an economically viable entity that stands on its own feet. The demand for hyper-local produce is far beyond what can be met by the few organizations that receive the few grants and limited volunteer help. Needless to say, the market has yet to respond to this demand.

Work with Redesign. Starting a business is difficult and risky. Redesign has over 40 years of experience in business development assistance and staff to facilitate the creation of a business plan. We also are the master developer at the 4-acre Seward Commons site and can provide no or low rent to the start-up business.

Foundation Support. We are seeking foundation support to help cover the site preparation and construction costs (projected to be around \$5,000). This funding would even further lower the risk for the start-up business. See attached grant proposals.

Justice Questions. Who should have access to the limited funding? And how do we ensure that our work is not stepping on the toes of other, less affluent communities? Where is there room for partnership? These are tough questions that came up in my research,



particularly in relation to the Little Earth project in the neighboring Phillips community. I have yet to come to an answer, but I hope these questions will continue to inform Redesign's work with urban agriculture.

Implementation

Our vision was big. Redesign initially envisioned a five story, full-scale hydroponic production system that would provide produce for and accept organic wastes from the entire metro area. Unsurprisingly, the idea was somewhat daunting to the City and was met with much political resistance from other organizations in the area looking to implement similar projects. That was the problem: there is only room for one metro-wide greenhouse and organic waste drop-off site, much like there is only room for one Monsanto...

Luckily, the site we were planning to develop was unavailable. In the wake of our disappointment, we were able to refocus and regroup ourselves. One local food conglomerate is not the solution. The whole point of this movement is to downsize and diversify, to build from the ground up, not the top down.

Through discussions with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Local Foods Program and a careful investigation of the Will Allen's Growing Power Model, we have scaled back our vision for food production in Seward. We have concluded that the best and most effective way forward is to erect one semi-permanent high tunnel and grow from there - lower capital costs allows us to move forward more quickly and also are less of a burden on the agriculture business, allowing the food to be sold at lower costs and thereby accessible to lower-income populations in the end. This path for the project will establish urban agriculture in Seward while providing an immediate and concrete response to the Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations. While a larger, more permanent greenhouse is still firmly planted somewhere along the horizon, our vision is to remain grounded in values of this movement - locally, sustainably, ethically and economically produced food that is accessible to everyone.

The Site. Finding a site was both the most difficult and easiest aspect of this project. We were first considering a City-owned parcel on 26th Street and Minnehaha Avenue. This site would have been perfect for our large-scale aspirations. Once that site was gone, we spent hours scanning aerial maps looking for open lots. After reevaluating our purpose in this movement, though, the answer was clear. Redesign owns a 4-acre parcel at the edge of the Seward neighborhood with a parking lot that is not used by current tenants and, therefore, that Redesign does not depend on income from it. An empty parking lot on the site will be perfect for throwing down some woodchips, throwing up a high tunnel and starting production next spring.

The Design. Choosing a design was very straight forward. There are a few different types of structures used to extend the growing season. The "gothic" shaped high tunnel is best suited for Minnesota's harsh weather and heavy snows. The size was chosen to maximize growing square footage for our site. See attached diagrams and resources.

The Operator. We are not farmers, so finding a skilled and experienced operator is just as important as locating a site. The Twin Cities are buzzing with urban agriculture enthusiasts. Using networks through the Seward Co-op, the Birchwood Cafe and the Institute for



Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), we were able to narrow the list and eventually hook up with a skilled season extension grower with a wealth of urban agriculture experience. He is currently working through the details of the business plan and is hoping to start growing next spring.

Conclusions

The way forward is clearly not for everyone to drop everything and take up farming. At the other extreme, we are also not looking to create more of the same big conglomerates that spurred this revolution in the first place. The healthy balance is in collaboration. And what place-based community development corporations will bring to the table is to do what we have always done best - neighborhood-based business development with entrepreneurs based on community priorities and objectives.

Index to Attachments

Homegrown Minneapolis Initiative Final Recommendations, Appendix C: Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture Subcommittee Recommendations
(for full report, see www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp)

Farmers and Food Thinkers

Sample Grant Proposal Narrative

Letter to Potential Operators

Site map and Diagrams:

- Footprint
- Side view
- Bird's eye view

Appendix C: Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture Subcommittee Recommendations

Homegrown Minneapolis Subcommittee Reporting Form

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Subcommittee: | Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture <u>Note:</u> For the purposes of Homegrown Minneapolis, SEUA is defined as types of urban agriculture that have the potential to create jobs, provide job training and generate new enterprises. SEUA and “urban ag” are used interchangeably below. |
| Co-Chairs: | Cara Letofsky, City of Minneapolis Mayor’s Office JoAnne Berkenkamp, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy |
| Participants: | Allie Mentzer, Andy Berndt, Beth Dooley, Betsy Wieland, David Denham, Dayna Burtness, Grover Jones, Gunnar Liden, Helen Simrill, Holly Aprea, Ila Duntelman, Jeanne Lakso, Jennifer Blecha, June Mathiowetz, Kara Ferguson, Kirsten Saylor, Madeline Kastler, MaryLynn Pulscher, Paula Westmoreland, Rhys Williams, Robin Russell, Sarah Claassen, Tamara Downs Schwei, Tammy Dickinson, Karin R. Berkholtz, Julie Aponte, Stefan Meyer, Kelly J. Wilder |
| Vision Statement: | Urban agriculture has the potential to create green jobs in our city, increase access to healthy food, and be an important economic development tool. The Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture committee envisions Minneapolis as a place where those interested in growing and processing food in the City have access to appropriate land, training, business development support and markets for the food they grow. Similarly, the community will benefit from neighborhood revitalization, new jobs and training opportunities, and closer linkages between eaters and those who grow their food. With support from government, nonprofits, and the private sector, urban agriculture plays a leading role in making the City of Minneapolis a more verdant and healthy community. |
| Baseline Analysis: | <p>There is now a groundswell of interest in urban agriculture across the country and in Minneapolis. SEUA can be a compelling strategy in support of green jobs, neighborhood revitalization, physical fitness, healthier diets, youth development, and improving access by low income and other communities to fresh produce.</p> <p>Many other metropolitan areas have extensive urban ag programs in place including Detroit, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Portland and Seattle. Some have passed significant city legislation to support the expansion of urban agriculture. The City of London set a goal of 2013 gardens in the city by the Year 2013.</p> <p>Minneapolis is rich with organizations and individuals who are already helping to grow the local food system. These include organizations experienced with youth gardening, farmer training and development of food and agriculture businesses; grocery co-ops, farmers markets and restaurants and their consumers who seek local food; and other non-profits and philanthropic community who support this work. Additionally, there are several organizations and individuals who have expressed interest in launching urban farms and food processing enterprises.</p> <p>The City of Minneapolis’ new comprehensive plan, the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, supports and values community gardens throughout the City; however, City policy does not currently support using, or providing leases on City-owned vacant parcels for gardening or urban agriculture purposes, nor is there any zoning guidance for commercial forms of urban agriculture in Minneapolis’ code.</p> <p>The City and partner organizations offer a variety of resources for individuals starting new business enterprises, including business planning, access to small business loans, and other technical assistance. Several small business support organizations that have experience with food-related enterprises could potentially help a new generation of urban ag entrepreneurs get up and running.</p> |

| Recommendations: | | I. Develop City land use policy framework that supports SEUA | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| City's land use policies support urban ag, and urban ag is seen as an integral part of the long term vision for the City in the City's comp plan | 1. Work with community stakeholders to develop a city-wide plan for urban agriculture, including where it best fits into the urban landscape; then adopt to add as part of the City's comprehensive plan. Create a definition of SEUA that, in addition to urban farming, includes things like mushrooms, bees, nursery plants, orchards, aquaponics, value-added, etc. Establish an indicator and numeric goal for the expansion of urban ag in consultation with community stakeholders | Would need to be adopted by the city council/mayor, and funds found to conduct the process | City/CPED Planning, Sustainability office, community representatives, Non-profits involved in urban ag, urban planners, etc. |
| | 2. Update zoning code to support urban agricultural land uses and related infrastructure (such as hoopouses, fencing and storage sheds), possibly including explicit recognition of urban ag as a zoning district and provisions to support long-term secured land tenure for urban ag uses. | | City/CPED Planning, research support from non-profits involved in urban ag |
| | 3. Review other City codes (e.g. zoning definitions of farmers markets and/or farm stands, on-site sales, mobile vending, on-site composting and vermiculture, food safety and handling) for consistency with supporting urban ag, | | City/CPED Planning Non-City planning/ zoning professionals |
| | 4. Identify policies and incentives to encourage developers to include space for food gardens in new developments: a. Update codes so that land set aside for SEUA (and/or community gardens) counts towards existing green space set-aside requirements. b. Update green building requirements or incentive programs so that dedication of space for gardening and/or agreements to purchase locally grown food counts towards green building requirements | | Green Building Council CPED |
| | 5. Identify additional policies and incentives to encourage the establishment of new green roofs and the adaptation of existing roofs for food production | | Green Building Council City/CPED Planning |
| | 6. Explore establishing tax incentives for private land owners to lease land to urban farmers, including creating an agricultural tax status for private land use for urban ag purposes | | |

| Recommendations: | | II. Coordinate with land-owners to document and increase access to land for SEUA | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Potential sites for SEUA have been identified. Vehicles for increasing secure access to land have been established and are enabling urban ag entrepreneurs to access and retain appropriate land. | 1. Conduct a multi-jurisdictional, public-private inventory of land in the City suitable for urban agriculture purposes (to include brownfields, MPRB, schools, MAC land and privately held land, e.g. Xcel Energy, churches, corporations and possibly vacant greenhouses). Include soil quality, sun, water, electricity access, etc. (there is site evaluation sheet from Gardening Matters) | | City, Hennepin County, Park Board, Private lending institutions, Other private landholders including businesses, churches, etc., Non-profit partners and networks, Minneapolis Public School and other educational institutions |
| | 2. Develop policies, guidelines (i.e. sample leases, criteria for sale) and partnerships to support affordable land ownership and/or affordable long-term leases for SEUA on various types of land and rooftops, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> city-owned non-development parcels, possibly including rights of way and municipal properties like fire stations tax-forfeited land, in cooperation with relevant county entities bank-owned properties, in cooperation with private financial institutions other privately owned land in partnership with businesses, churches and other landholders | | City, Hennepin County, Park Board, Private lending institutions, Other private landholders including businesses, churches, etc., Non-profit partners and networks, Minneapolis Public School and other educational institutions |
| | 3. Support or provide a “match-making” web-based service to connect people and organizations seeking land with property owners (akin to Sustain’s web-based model in London) (maybe use the interactive Google-map function?) | | |
| Recommendations: | | III. Foster Workforce Development Opportunities in Urban Agriculture | |
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Youth and adults have meaningful opportunities to engage in urban agriculture. Career pathways are available for those interested in farming as a profession | 1. Include urban agriculture (that separates it from urban gardening) in the City’s definition of green jobs | CPED is currently drafting a definition of “green jobs”, so this can be added. It will also be included in the new Green Economy Sustainability Indicator | City/CPED and Sustainability Office |
| | 2. Expand and support the youth training programs in Minneapolis to include SEUA including urban farming, food processing and bringing products to market (Step Up, Summer Youth Employment Program) | Make sure there is a match btw business developers and the programs that will train their workforce Common location for workers to access resources re-employment and training opportunities | City/CPED Employment and Training, Community colleges, Youth development and employment orgs, Sustainable agriculture and local food orgs, UM including UM Extension, Master Gardeners, Business partners |

| Recommendations: | III. Foster Workforce Development Opportunities in Urban Agriculture | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| | 3. Expand and support training and career pathways for urban agricultural entrepreneurs as part of the City's Employment and Training programs, including the reentry population | Connect METP partner organizations to the farmer training programs to create new partnerships | City/CPED Employment and Training, Community colleges, NGO partners |
| Recommendations: | IV. Support Development of SEUA Enterprises | | |
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Urban Ag entrepreneurs are able to connect with high quality business development services and sources of capital to start or expand their business, with an emphasis on improving local food access in neighborhoods | 1. Expand and promote existing small business training and business development services to entrepreneurs interested in urban ag enterprises (e.g. feasibility studies, business planning, marketing, management training, food safety and inspections, zoning and licensing requirements). | | City/CPED Econ Dev, Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON), Nhood Dev Corp (NDC), Metro Consortium of Community Dev (MCCD), Women Venture, Cooperative Development Services, etc. |
| | 2. Promote existing low-interest small business loan programs, and expand availability of micro-grants to food production and processing enterprises if necessary to ensure that SEUA business activities are allowed in City lending programs. (include City's Great Streets Programs) | May need to start by indentifying if lending needs for SEUA are different than more traditional small businesses | City/CPED Business Finance and partners (NDC, MCCD, Women Venture, banks and others) |
| | 3. Identify and institute strategies to assist urban ag enterprises in managing liability risks. | | City |
| | 4. Create a "healthy/sustainable food" public-private fund (such as Pennsylvania's Fresh Food Financing Initiative) that finances SEUA as well as food distribution, storage, processing, retail, food waste management enterprises, etc. | | City, State, private financial institutions |

| Recommendations: | V. Expand Infrastructure for SEUA | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Minneapolis has a robust business infrastructure that supports urban food production and related enterprises | 1. Support the expansion development of a composting infrastructure in the Twin Cities to ensure access to affordable sources of compost for SEUA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify lead who can aggregate compost orders to enter contracts with compost facilities to make urban farmers' compost more affordable • Expand the City's existing composting pilot(s) so that all commercial (including large food producers and businesses) and residential customers (including apartment buildings) have access to food scrap/yard waste composting to ensure a feedstock for compost facilities • Establish contracts with commercial compost facilities to ensure that SEUA/community gardens have access to affordable compost • Support onsite composting pilots (including vermiculture, windrows, etc.) as a priority as it is the most affordable and environmentally beneficial form of composting • Conduct a feasibility study on the potential for expanding the collection and composting of organic waste to support urban ag and other uses and create green jobs | City, community development organizations, non-profits who work on urban ag, Garden Matters |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recommendations: | V. Expand Infrastructure for SEUA | | |
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| | 2. Conduct an inventory of existing commercial kitchen facilities that may be appropriate for processing of food grown in the city and identify vehicles for linking entrepreneurs with processing facilities. | | City/Regulatory Services, local businesses, non-profit partners |
| | 3. Support the development of facilities to support urban ag-related food aggregation, processing, distribution, food storage and food waste management. | | |
| | 4. Support expanded access to tools and small food production equipment for SEUA. | | |
| Recommendations: | VI. Increase Communications and Community Connections around SEUA | | |
| Vision | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Interested members of the public have clear points of connection to information and services pertaining to Urban Ag | 1. Develop web-based resources that provide a one-stop-shop of City-related information about urban agriculture enterprise development, City regulations and policies (including food safety and food sales), business development services and other links to other resources. Provide in multiple languages | May need partnership between City govt and others to cover all relevant topics Set up 3-1-1 to be able to answer basic questions about conducting urban ag in the City of Minneapolis Put City's sustainability work more prominent on the City's website Set up a network similar to COMGAR for market growers in Minneapolis | City/Sustainability, UofMN (MISA; is putting together an urban ag website), local non-profits |
| | 2. Identify a point-person to be the City's liaison with members of the public who are interested in learning more about City government-related aspects of urban ag. | | City |
| Recommendations: | VII. Umbrella Recommendations | | |
| | Recommendation | Details/Action Steps | Key Partners |
| Note: These are ideas that are not specific to urban ag and affect the whole HGM effort... | 1. City of Minneapolis should adopt a food policy resolution that states the city's commitment to growing the local food system, outlines implementation strategies and establishes measurable goals | HGM initiative partners can draft, then bring to Mayor and City Council as part of presentation on HGM report in June | |
| | 2.Something on how the City could help expand the market for local food. Could include: Creating an incentive for city entities to purchase locally grown food, including food generated through urban ag | | |
| | 3. Create a Homegrown Minneapolis public relations campaign that builds public awareness and support for the goals and vision of this initiative | Develop Homegrown Minneapolis branding materials (logo, values, etc) for urban ag activities to adopt to be part of this initiative | City/Communications, public relations firm, non-profit partners |

Farmers and Food Thinkers

JoAnne Berkenkamp, IATP Local Foods Director

JoAnne was pivotal in our decision to scale back our initial goal of a multi-story, high-tech greenhouse. Her knowledge of the effectiveness and low-cost of high tunnels and hoop houses helped us to refocus our project to smaller, more manageable scale. She was also involved in drafting the Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture recommendations as a part of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative.

jberkenkamp@iatp.org, 612.870.3410

Dayna Burtness, IATP Local Foods Program Associate

Dayna helped start the farm at St. Olaf and was at one point a potential operator for our project. With IATP, she was in charge of the changes to the WIC program. This information is helping Redesign to develop outreach programming to ensure that corner groceries meet the new produce requirements to be WIC certified. Dayna has since left IATP and is working on a farm in Northfield, MN.

dayna.burtness@gmail.com

Sarah Classen, Land Stewardship Project, Community Food Systems Organizer

Sarah directed me to Xe Susane Moua, Valerie Martinez and Stephan Meyer. The Land Stewardship Project has also done a lot of work with rural digesters.

sarahc@landstewardshipproject.org, 612.722.6377

Atina Diffley, Organic FarmingWorks Consultant

Atina offered to donate consulting assistance with production methods and/or farmer training should we need help. She has a long history of involvement in the local foods movement and seems like a very valuable resource.

atina@organicfarmingworks.com, 952.469.1855 (farmhouse)

Jerry Ford, Sustainable Farming Association of MN, Youth Outreach Coordinator

Jerry hooked us up with social media (i.e. Facebook) to assist our search for potential operators.

kreitlow@cmgate.com, 320.543.3394

Barb Grossman, UMN Extension, Urban Operations Director

Barb has a wealth of knowledge of urban agriculture issues and operations in the Twin Cities. She brought up issues including immigrant farmers (providing space to grow culturally appropriate produce and grains), youth engagement (urban 4-H model) and the economic viability of urban agriculture endeavors.

gross342@umn.edu, 612.625.1782, 651.334.7478 (cell)

Cara Letofsky, Policy Aid, Office of the Mayor

Cara is very involved with the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. She will be a major player in policy changes that will affect the zoning and permitting requirements for small enterprise urban agriculture operations.

cara.letofsky@ci.minneapolis.mn.us, 612.673.2109

Travis Lusk, Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli, Produce Manger

Travis provided pricing on produce and helped us search for potential operators by extending our project description to his network of growers and food thinkers. He also indicated that the Co-op would be interested in buying whatever we produce.

tlusk@seward.coop

Stephan Meyer, Backyard Harvest

Stephan is our primary potential operator. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge with urban growing and hydroponics.

stephanm777@gmail.com

Xe Susane Moua, City Backyard Farming

Susane is working with a SARE grant to explore the economic viability of an urban CSA. She farms on vacant and/or free land and is expecting to turn a reasonable profit this year. Although our project will include the cost of land, we can definitely learn from her experience.

651.263.1167

Brian Noy, Augsburg Campus Kitchen Coordinator

Brian is a former HECUA Environmental Sustainability student who started the Mini Market program through his internship at IATP. He now coordinates the Augsburg community garden, Campus Kitchen program and farmer's market.

Steve Peacock, Augsburg College, Director of Community Relations

Steve has indicated that Augsburg may be interested in forming a partnership with our urban agriculture efforts. Redesign staff will be meeting with Augsburg's Sustainability Committee to discuss a potential relationship.

peacock@augsborg.edu, 612.330.1583

Aaron Reser, Mill City Market Organizer

Aaron has lots of hands on experience with implementing urban agriculture programs. She looked at our project from every angle and revealed potential issues and concerns we never would have thought of. She has indicated interest in continuing to help with and inform our work.

aaron.reser@gmail.com

Tracy Singleton, Birchwood Cafe Owner

Tracy played a key role in developing the Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations. Her business works closely with farmers to source as much locally-grown produce as possible. Tracy has also indicated that the Birchwood Cafe will purchase whatever we produce.

tracy@birchwoodcafe.com

Chuck Waibel, Garden Goddess Enterprises

Garden Goddess Enterprises is an excellent example of season extension practices. Although Chuck is a rural farmer, his success with growing year-round greens and other vegetables in a hoop house above his garage can inform our methods here in the city.

newworld@fedteldirect.net, 320.734.4669



I. Organization Information

Redesign was founded in 1969 as a community development corporation in Minneapolis' Seward neighborhood. In recent years, Redesign expanded its focus area to include the Hiawatha LRT Corridor and the four neighborhoods of the Greater Longfellow Community.

Redesign is a place-based community development corporation, with strong ties to and history with the communities we serve. We have been and will be in it for the long haul - our work across disciplines serves a long-term public interest that is not served by the private market. Redesign's approach creates the opportunity for immigrants, women, small business owners and neighbors to bring their absolute best to the community.

Redesign has made a major investment in the past three years to promote transit oriented development (TOD). With four transit stations (along Minnesota's first light rail line) in our service area, we have a major responsibility to shape development and infrastructure improvements to benefit our neighborhoods, low-income and immigrant residents, and locally owned businesses. In many cities throughout the country, the private market has proven LRT to be an asset, but the benefits have flowed almost exclusively to those with higher incomes.

Redesign has also taken a leadership role in elevating sustainability issues. Our role ranges from specific real estate projects that aim for LEED certification (Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli) to large-scale master planning for energy conservation and sustainability (Seward Commons/Bystrom site).

A. Organization's Mission and Goals

Redesign's mission is to plan, advocate and implement development that responds to community priorities and creates living-wage jobs, affordable housing, and quality goods and services. Redesign has a track record of creating healthy neighborhoods that provide opportunities to build wealth for low-income and immigrant residents and business owners.

As an urban, community-based development organization we see that our expertise can play a central role in the creation of new urban agricultural production facilities (defined as desirable by the Homegrown Minneapolis Initiative). Ultimately, creating urban agriculture is business development with entrepreneurs - an area in which we have nearly 40 years of experience. Our board and staff are committed to using our resources to make real strides in the local foods movement in Seward and the communities we serve.

B. Current Activities, Strengths and Accomplishments

We continue to build stronger neighborhoods and improve the vitality of commercial corridors along East Franklin Avenue, East Lake Street and the Hiawatha Corridor through community planning, small business development, commercial façade improvements and real estate development. Our work includes a strong focus on sustainability: planning for resource reduction and high efficiency in infrastructure and real estate development.

One outstanding example of our work as a developer is the recent expansion and relocation of the Seward Co-op and Deli. As developer for the Seward Co-op Grocery and Deli relocation and expansion, Redesign coordinated site acquisition, community engagement, environmental



remediation and financing for the project and provided project management services throughout construction. Now completed, the Seward Co-op expansion and relocation has already:

- Created more than 50 living wage jobs
- Provided access to groceries within easy walking or transit access for many low-income and immigrant residents, and
- Transformed a blighted site on Franklin Avenue into a community (and cooperatively owned) asset.

The Co-op also stands out because of their commitment to provide locally grown food—Seward Co-op utilizes over 50 local producers as suppliers of products sold to the community.

Our role in this project allowed us to dedicate the necessary time and effort to navigate the complex financing needed to make this project happen - an investment of time and energy that would likely not have been palatable to a for-profit developer. This project required a financing package that included New Market Tax Credits (funded through Wells Fargo Community Lending), as well as months of conversations with the community to negotiate a site plan that met the needs of both the Co-op and the neighborhood. Retaining the Co-op as the anchor store in the community was also critical to sustaining the vitality of this entire stretch of East Franklin Avenue.

C. Relationship with Other Organizations

The quality of our work relies upon the relationships that we continually strive for with other developers, levels of government and neighborhood organizations and institutions.

We have strong relationship with key local institutions, including the Seward Neighborhood Group, the Seward Civic and Commerce Association, the Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association, and the Lake Street Council. We also have strong working relationships with Councilman Cam Gordon, and City and County staffs. Related to our interest in local foods and sustainable neighborhoods, we have forged a new relationship with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Members of our staff and board have also made the pilgrimage to Will Allen's Growing Power facility in Milwaukee.

D. Board and Staff

Redesign's board reflects the communities in which we work, including representation from Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods, residents and small businesses, with the expertise needed to provide financial oversight as we undertake complex planning and development projects. A profile of individual board member qualifications is attached.

Redesign's five full-time staff members represent a breadth of technical skills that allow us to think critically and act creatively in shaping the vitality of our neighborhoods. Our staff bring over 20 years experience in community development with backgrounds that also include: construction management, engineering, commercial and residential development, architecture, business finance and law. A more detailed description of staff qualifications is attached.

Our staff is augmented by consultants with a range of technical skills needed to maintain sound financial management, MIS systems, website, data base and other infrastructure needs.



II. Purpose of the Grant

Redesign is requesting funding from Patagonia for the creation of 1-2 greenhouses (hoop houses) to provide an opportunity for urban agriculture production in Seward. Redesign can provide the project management assistance to help an existing season extension farmer to navigate the licensing and regulatory hurdles in order to establish an urban location. Furthermore, Redesign is a land owner of a 4-acre parcel of industrially zoned land in Seward which could serve as a local for this activity.

A. Opportunities, Challenges and Issues

Redesign would like to create an urban greenhouse facility at an industrial site in Seward. This collection of hoop houses and compost piles, operated by an experienced season extension farmer, would establish urban farming as a viable commercial and community interest. Redesign staff is working to identify an experienced operator, starting with a list of farmers who supply to local businesses, including the Seward Co-op and the Birchwood Café.

In the midst of the current economic shift, we are seeing an unparalleled historic opportunity for communities to realign their goals and priorities towards establishing a healthier, more sustainable culture. As spending choices shift, businesses that support this culture are bucking the economic trend, as seen with the very successful expansion of the Seward Co-op (Co-op sales have been double its projections in this past year). In the case of the Seward neighborhood, existing core values related to local commerce, healthy pedestrian lifestyles and natural, organic food are strengthened further. Already established as one of the earliest and strongest supporters of locally grown, organic produce, our neighborhood is ready to take hold of the growing interest in urban, neighborhood-based agriculture with this new urban farm.

This program also addresses the goals recently set forth by the Homegrown Minneapolis Initiative (see attached). The final report, which just passed the City Council, includes a section of recommendations for small enterprise urban agriculture. According to this document, Minneapolis is envisioned “as a place where those interested in growing and processing food in the City have access to appropriate land, training, business development support and markets for the food they grow.”

A recent New York Times Magazine article on Will Allen’s Growing Power also highlighted the need for the development of urban agriculture as a sustainable business model:

Employing locals to grow food for the hungry on neglected land has an irresistible appeal, but it’s not clear yet whether Growing Power’s model can work elsewhere. “I know how to make money growing food,” Allen asserts. But he’s also got between 30 and 50 employees to pay, which makes those foundation grants – and a grant-writer – essential. Growing Power also relies on large numbers of volunteers. All of which perhaps explains why other urban farmers have not yet replicated Growing Power’s scale or its unique social achievements.

We believe that our project addresses our community’s increasing and sustained interest in local food systems and that we can help to create a project that builds on Will Allen’s amazing success by creating a model for economically viable urban farms.



B. Overall Goals

The overall goals of this grassroots project are to establish urban agriculture as a viable small business enterprise model in the City of Minneapolis.

This project goals or outputs include the following:

- These greenhouses used for food production would be among the first of their kind within the City - we envision our project leading the way for many to follow,
- This project would bring to life goals set by the recently adopted Homegrown Minneapolis plan,
- Urban production of organic food would greatly reduce the carbon footprint of a portion of our community's food supply (including the Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli and the Birchwood Cafe, two iconic Seward businesses that have already committed to buying produce from these greenhouses),
- This project can prove the business model for small enterprise urban agriculture and open doors to a new sector of the economy, and
- This project will be the first of its kind to negotiate the regulatory and zoning processes in the City of Minneapolis, which have limited experience with agricultural production within the City, thereby paving the way for more urban agricultural production to follow.

B. Objectives, Activities and Timeline

See budget attachment.

C. Community Benefit

The Seward community is motivated to see this project come to fruition. Redesign has strong support from the Seward Neighborhood Group and their Environment Committee as well as the Seward Civic and Commerce Association to make this goal a reality. This community support is an important first hurdle to making any development project happen but it is also part of what will make this project a success for the entire community. Seward has long been a neighborhood that attracts individuals and businesses who value sustainability - businesses like the Birchwood Café with their local-foods menu are icons that help define Seward.

This project will benefit the community through the creation of organic produce available locally. The transportation costs for businesses who have already expressed an interest in sourcing from this business, like the Seward Co-op, Birchwood Café, and Coastal Seafoods, would be shorter than any option available to date.

D. Long-term Funding Strategies

Redesign's goal from the outset is to create a model project that brings organic food production to our community in an economically sustainable manner. By investing with us on the front end to navigate a yet untested regulatory process for the City, WedgeShare will help this project to be an economically viable business in the long term. Our hope is that this model for economic and environmental sustainability will be replicable in neighborhoods throughout the City.



III. Evaluation

As a community-based development corporation, a central aspect of our work is to engage the people of the communities in which we work in setting our priorities. The engagement happens through constant, one-on-one connection with residents and businesses in the community; working with neighborhood and ethnic-serving organizations; and participating in the public planning process for development that concerns our impact area.

This urban agricultural project will be successful if we maintain interest and engagement from the community through our board. A special task force which will be created to guide and ensure the success of the project.

Redesign will also measure our success based on our ability to start-up an agricultural business in the Seward neighborhood as well as document the project so that it can be replicated. We will build in a 12-month evaluation of the business to measure and report on the economic viability of the business model.



Dear Aspiring Urban Farmers:

Redesign is seeking an experienced grower to operate a Seward Urban Farm. Our goal is to construct 1-2 greenhouses on industrially zoned property that we own in the Seward neighborhood. We believe that this project addresses our community's increasing and sustained interests in local food systems and that Redesign has the resources to implement a project that reflects them - but we need a farmer!

Our vision for this project is to bring an experienced grower to operate a farm at these greenhouses in Seward. This grower would then provide hyper-local, organic produce to corner groceries, co-ops and restaurants. Growing in the urban setting will provide food with lower transportation costs and creates an opportunity for the community to be engaged with and connected to the source of their food.

Redesign will contribute to the project in the following ways:

Redesign is committed to seeing urban agriculture take off in Minneapolis. To that end, we are proposing to lease land that we currently own at a nominal rent during a start-up phase. Our goal is that, within 2-3 years, the business will be a self-sustaining, economically viable model that can be replicated throughout neighborhoods in Minneapolis. In addition to the land for this project, Redesign will also provide project management services. Ultimately, creating urban agriculture is business development with entrepreneurs - an area in which we have nearly 40 years of experience. Our project management services will include work with the farmer on their business plan and financing as well as navigating the City's regulatory and zoning hurdles.

We have been referred to you by Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli. A brief narrative is attached. If you are interested in what we are proposing, please send us a description of yourself - your background, experience and current interests, or just give a call to discuss or set up a meeting.

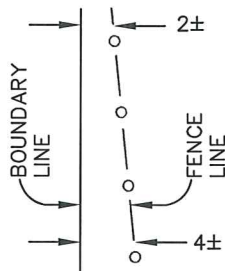
We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

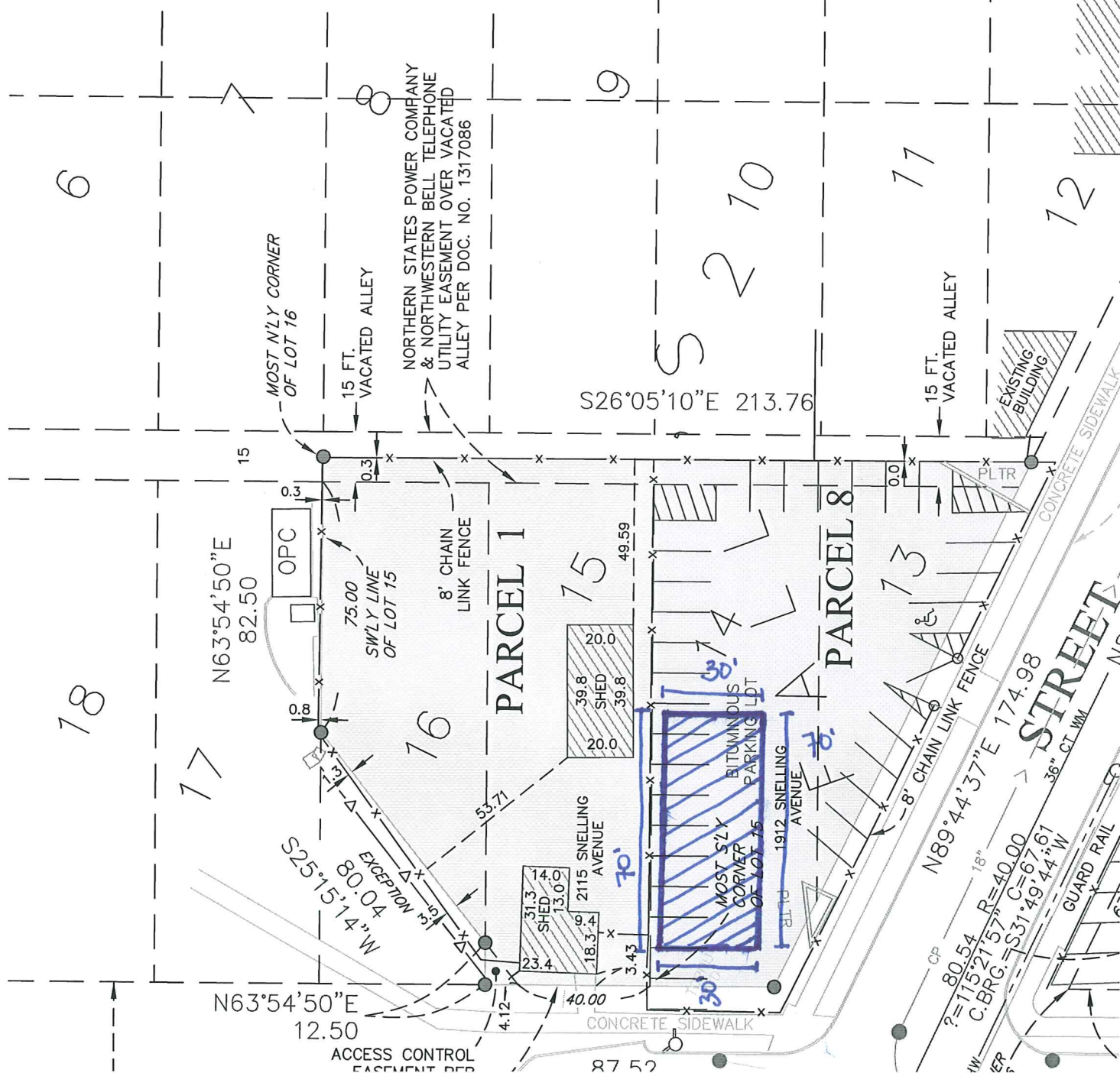
Megan Sheridan, Assistant Project Manager
megan@redesigninc.org
612.435.0279

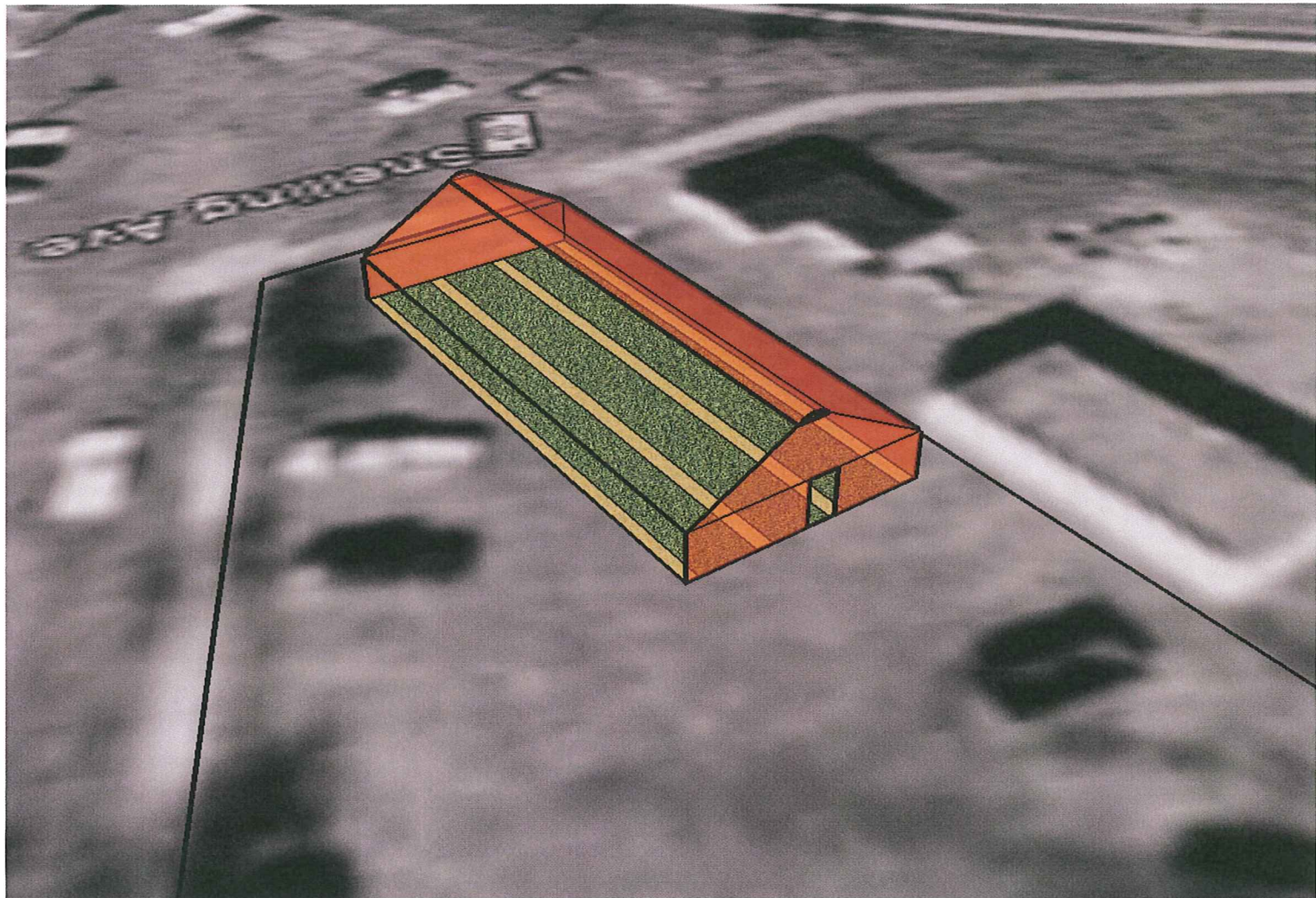


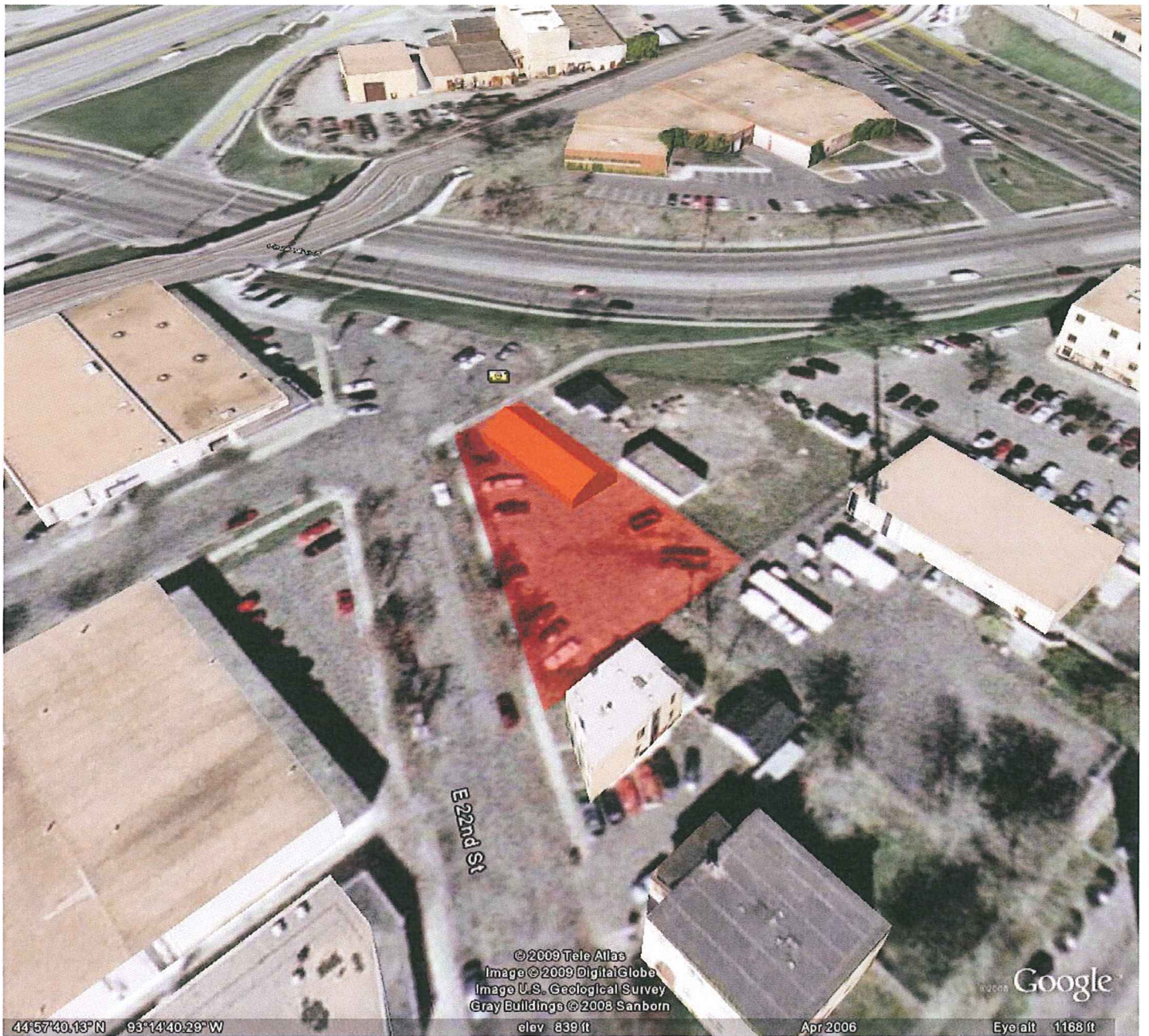
- Denotes a 1/2 inch by 14 inch iron pipe set in the ground and marked by License No. 24764
- Denotes a Found Iron Monument



Fence & Building ties are shown on the side of the boundary line that the fence or building is located on.







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Gray Buildings © 2008 Sanborn

Google

44°57'40.13"N 93°14'40.29"W

elev 839 ft

Apr 2006

Eye alt 1168 ft